

## COUNTY PARKS AND OPEN SPACE LANDS PROTECTED BY MSCP

**C**an you imagine a Green belt around our communities in San Diego that permanently protects our natural resources and limits urban sprawl? Places where our children hike and picnic while learning about nature? The San Diego County Board of Supervisors has established the Multiple Species Conservation Program (MSCP) as an integral part of the County's efforts to protect parks and open space for future generations.

The MSCP has a goal to protect 172,000 acres of natural habitat lands in the southwestern portion of the County. Achieving this goal will not only protect natural lands for our children but will also protect sensitive plant and animal species. The protection of these sensitive species by the MSCP will eliminate the need to list the species as endangered under Federal and State Endangered Species Acts and reduce

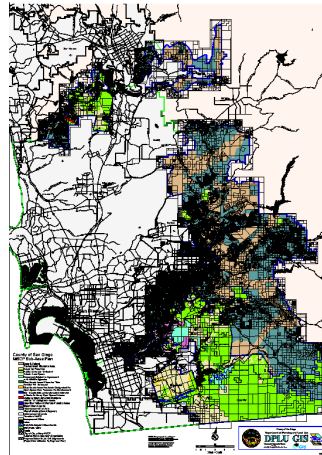
the costly permit process for private land owners and public agencies.

The MSCP is a cooperative effort between the County, the City of San Diego and other agencies such as the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service and California's Department of Fish and Game. These public partners are working with various private landowners in assembling the 172,000 Preserve. The County's share of the Preserve is 101,000 acres of unincorporated land while the remaining portions are planned for the Cities of southwestern San Diego County.

The County's MSCP plans to assemble the 172,000 acre greenbelt through the following methods:

- Development projects will be required to set aside natural lands to mitigate impacts to the natural environment

- The Federal and State government will acquire and set aside lands that will contribute to the Green-belt
- The County will buy lands from willing sellers and establish voluntary programs to encourage property owner participation.



## WHAT IS THE LAKESIDE ARCHIPELAGO ?

**T**he Lakeside "Archipelago" is a good illustration of the types of lands MSCP is designed to protect. This narrow strip of land provides an important natural bridge between sensitive vegetation communities to both north and south of Lakeside. It has been coined the "Archipelago" as the linkage is comprised of a series of small hills that run through the Lake-

side community. The Board of Supervisors, in partnership with the State of California, has been buying lands from willing sellers. To date the County has acquired 100 of the approximate 350 acres and is prepared to acquire additional lands when funding is available. This preserve will eventually link with established County Parks and have related educational nature programs.



The area includes Coastal sage scrub and Chaparral, the home of several sensitive species in the County including the federally listed California gnat-catcher.

### Inside this issue:

LUSARDI CREEK ACQUISITIONS	2
COUNTY RELEASES 1998 ANNUAL REPORT	2
WRIGHT'S FIELD COOPERATIVE ACQUISITION	3
SUPERVISORS SLATER AND JACOB HONORED	3
STATE PROPOSITION 12	3

### Special points of interest:

- San Diego County has 20 animal species and 27 plant species that are listed as threatened or endangered by the federal and state governments
- Passive recreation (hiking, riding, picnicking, and nature watching) are allowed in MSCP Preserves
- Preserves can increase property values in adjacent areas
- MSCP directly conserves eighty-five "covered" species



## LUSARDI CREEK ACQUISITIONS

### LUSARDI CREEK

Lusardi Creek is an important biological linkage in the San Dieguito Planning Area. It is home to a significant number of California gnatcatchers as well as other sensitive species such as the San Diego horned lizard. It is also a very valuable riparian habitat for a number of aquatic species. Lusardi Creek and its associated 249 acres of upland habitat establish a critical connection between Lake Hodges and the City of San Diego's North City West MSCP Preserve, as well as the San Dieguito River Park. So far, the County of San Diego and the State of California's Wildlife Conservation Board have acquired approximately 192 acres of this valuable area. This area not only provides linkage between the

County and City MSCP Preserves, it also provides a valuable connection to the San Elijo lagoon to the west and to the upland areas of the San Dieguito River watershed to the east.

### California gnatcatcher

*The California gnatcatcher is listed as a "Threatened Species" under the Federal Endangered Species Act. The gnatcatcher is a small song bird found in Coastal sage scrub habitat -one of the predominant natural vegetation communities found in Coastal San Diego County. A large percentage of this habitat has been lost to urbanization. Coastal sage scrub consists of low growing aromatic shrubs found on the south facing slopes and edges of valleys. A goal of the MSCP is to protect and conservation Coastal sage scrub habitat.*

## COUNTY RELEASES 1998 ANNUAL REPORT

**T**he County Board of Supervisors adopted the County of San Diego's Subarea Plan for the Multiple Species Conservation Program on October 22, 1997. One of the specific responsibilities of the County of San Diego is to prepare an annual report accounting for all of the habitat that was conserved and lost due to discretionary and certain ministerial approvals as well as land acquisitions for conservation purposes.

This report tracks all relevant permits involving conservation and loss that occurred in the MSCP Subarea Plan during the reporting period of March 17, 1998 to December 31,

1998. This was accomplished through the use of the County's Geographic Information System (GIS). In addition, the report includes the acreage of "baseline conservation" of lands conserved prior to and during the preparation of the MSCP.

To fulfill the requirements of the Subarea Plan, the County and its private and public partners must conserve 38,717 acres of land. During the first reporting period, the County conserved approximately 9,840 acres of habitat and authorized the disturbance of approximately 580 acres of habitat. These conservation acres reduce the County total unincorporated share to 28,866 acres as of the Dec 31, 1998 reporting period.